

Today's Announcement Continues the Era of Cooperation

In a breakthrough announced jointly today, the Pacific Bell/Greenlining Coalition partnership has agreed on strategies to address the problem.

Services and options have been identified to deal directly with service retention. These include reduced installation rates, payment arrangements, and toll restrictions. Trials of these services in the target communities have been successful.

"We've found that a large percentage of people who do not have phone service, want service. It is not the cost of Lifeline installation or basic service rates that prevents them from having it. Rather, service retention is a primary factor. Agreement on what the factors really are is a big step toward coming up with solutions," according to John Gamboa, Executive Director of the Greenlining Institute. "Through analysis and outreach trials in Oakland, the partnership has identified new ways to approach the issues."

A toll restriction service approved by the California Public Utilities Commission in December, makes it possible to block most unwanted incoming collect calls and outgoing long distance and toll calls from a customer's phone. In the first month, over 10,000 customers subscribed to the new service to better manage phone usage and to help retain service.

To deal with payment issues, Pacific Bell has proposed a plan to improve customer service processes, making it easier for customers to establish good credit history. In addition, an early bill could serve as notification to any customer, preventing charges from growing abnormally high.

New Outreach Strategies and Options Signal Dynamic Approach to Problem

This year, Universal Lifeline Telephone Service (ULTS) and service retention information education using community outreach will be increased by at least 50% for Asian-American and Hispanic communities and 100% for African American communities.

"In 1995, we saw an 8% increase in ULTS customers in the state, and we believe that is, in part, due to our efforts championed by the Greenlining Coalition," said Paul Turner, Pacific Bell ULTS Product Manager.

Pacific Bell's voice-mail products, Quick Dial Tone and Prepaid Phone Cards were also identified as additional solutions to phone retention issues.

Recent Announcements by Pacific Bell also Applauded

A trial Pacific Bell Calling Center was recently set up in Huntington Park to meet the needs of coin phone users. The Center allows people access to a clean, well-lit place from which they can make phone calls on coin operated telephones. If successful, information from this site will be used to improve phone service in other communities.

Pacific Bell is also making it easier to pay Pacific Bell bills. In addition to electronic bill payment and paying by mail, Pacific Bell is working to increase the number of Authorized Payment Locations across the state, such as, local merchants and community organizations.

Pacific Bell is a subsidiary of Pacific Telesis Group, a diversified telecommunications corporation based in San Francisco.

PACIFIC TELESIS/GREENLINING COALITION PRESS CONFERENCE Q/As

1. SPECIFICALLY, WHAT DOES THE AGREEMENT SAY?

Pacific Bell agreed in July, 1994 to a "good-faith-effort" goal of achieving 95% telephone penetration within five years for Hispanics, Asian Pacific Americans and African Americans. Pacific Bell and the Greenlining Coalition will also work together to agree on a methodology for measuring telephone penetration in these target groups.

2. WHAT'S THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGREEMENT?

To our knowledge, this is the first time a regional telephone company has pledged to work together with a key minority and consumer group to increase telephone penetration among Hispanics, Asian Pacific Americans and African Americans. The agreement also encourages the pursuit of "virtual" phone services like voice mail, and products and services to help customers better control their phone bills.

3. EXACTLY HOW DO YOU INTEND TO BOOST TELEPHONE PENETRATION RATES?

Following are some of the steps, included in the agreement, that Pacific Bell will consider:

- Set a good faith 95% telephone penetration goal for Hispanics, Asian Pacific Americans and African Americans.
- Implement a creative and aggressive multilingual marketing plan for Universal Lifeline Telephone Service that involves the input of the Greenlining Coalition and its members.
- Develop and market products and services that will enable customers to better control their phone bills, thus avoiding service disconnection.
- Offer "warm" or "quick" dial tone service where feasible to new occupants of a residence. Even if phone service has not yet been ordered, "quick" dial tone would let an occupant plug in his or her phone to call Pacific Bell's business office to make phone service arrangements and 9-1-1 in emergencies.

4. WHAT IS UNIVERSAL LIFELINE TELEPHONE SERVICE (ULTS)?

ULTS consists of basic Pacific Bell service at half the price plus the waiving of the FCC network access line charge of \$3.50 per month and a 50% savings on labor charges for installation of the first telephone jack, if required, in a person's home. ULTS is designed to enable people with a limited income to afford phone service. It provides for a reduced basic service connection charge of \$10.00 plus allows for new service without a deposit, provided there are no outstanding telephone bills.

5. HOW DO PACIFIC BELL VOICE-MAIL PRODUCTS, QUICK DIAL TONE AND PACIFIC BELL PREPAID CARDS HELP WITH PHONE RETENTION ISSUES?

- Pacific Bell's Voice-Mail products can address the mobility issue, whereby a person can have their messages follow them and have one reliable phone number where an employer or family member can contact them.
- Quick Dial Tone enables people to plug in their phones at a new residence and be able to make calls to emergency 9-1-1 and calls to Pacific Bell's business office to make phone service arrangements.
- The Pacific Bell Prepaid Phone Card is another way for people to manage their telephone expenses and works particularly well in tandem with the new toll restriction service. Available in denominations of \$5, \$10, and \$20, customers purchase cards and use them in lieu of cash to make telephone calls. The cost of each call is subtracted from the card.

6. WHAT ABOUT LANGUAGE AS A BARRIER FOR PHONE SERVICE, ASSISTANCE OR REPAIR?

Pacific Bell has been providing services in languages other than English for over 11 years with input and assistance from members of the Greenlining Coalition. Annually, Pacific Bell receives over 6-million calls to business offices from customers speaking Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese and Tagalog.

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Description:

Toll Restriction will:

Allow customers to have limited service while paying off delinquent balances instead of paying a deposit

Timeline:

Toll Restriction can be requested for two weeks up to six months maximum

Descripción:

La Restricción de Llamadas con Cargo:

Permitirá los clientes el acceso al servicio limitado mientras pagan saldos atrasados, en vez de pagar un depósito

Período:

La Restricción de Llamadas con Cargo esta disponible por un período de dos semanas y un máximo de seis meses

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